



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 21 • June 11, 2010



## IM Weekly Highlights



- Site improvement work is starting on the XL Heights site in Jefferson County.
- Roger Smith is testing the engineering modification to the generator at the Belgian Hill site, which should resolve generator starting issues.
- Motorola will start coverage testing next weeks of sites in the Gallatin County area and will continue testing of sites in Cascade, Flathead, Jefferson, Lincoln and Sanders Counties over the next few weeks.
- Bids for the new Belle Prairie site are set to go out next week.

## SCIP Workshop Lively and Informative

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

Representatives of Interoperability Montana and state and county agencies gathered in Helena on Mon., June 7 for a workshop with three federal Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) employees. The day-long workshop was designed to bring public safety stakeholders up to date with the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP.) It also focused on evaluating progress and updating initiatives in Montana's Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

Robert "Dusty" Rhoads gave an update on OEC, which supports and promotes the ability of



OEC Staffers Eric Dodds, Morgan Stanley and Robert "Dusty" Rhoads facilitated the SCIP Update Workshop in Helena.

NECP goals that are intended to drive improvements in interoperability and continuity of

emergency responders and government officials to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. He also reviewed

communications for emergency responders. The NECP is designed to enhance governance, planning, technology training and exercises, and disaster communications capabilities.

OEC staffer Eric Dodds provided background on the SCIP and led a discussion to gain input on several SCIP initiatives that have been completed or are still in progress. This dialogue resulted in several new milestones and goals. After lunch, Morgan Stanley facilitated small group discussions on outreach and educational activities targeted to specific audiences.

There was a free flow of ideas for enhancing Montana's SCIP and directing future outreach and educational activities. PSSB is grateful to all the folks who participated.

## Dept. of Interior Proposes Expanded Collaboration with Montana

By Scott Bradford, [sbradford@mt.gov](mailto:sbradford@mt.gov)

Chris Lewis, U.S. Dept. of Interior (DOI) Interoperability Program Manager, visited Montana this week to explore ways to expand interoperable communication opportunities between DOI Bureaus and the State of Montana.

Chris, a long-time friend and partner with the state and Interoperability Montana (IM), met with several federal agencies, state officials and the IM Executive Director during his three-day visit.

In October 2006, Montana and the DOI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (the first of its kind) to collaborate on communications interoperability and the sharing of resources. Since that time, several DOI communication sites and frequencies have contributed to Montana's continued communications system deployment. Due to new DOI directives, Chris is looking to expand participation in Montana and other states to include increased resource sharing and system use.



Scott Bradford, PSSB, and Chris Lewis, Dept. of Interior, examine a coverage map of Montana.

PSSB is excited about the new prospects for additional cooperation and the benefits to be realized by DOI agencies and Montana responders.

### Successful Tower Climbing Class

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

On Tues. and Wed., June 8 and 9, Montana Highway Patrol, Dept. of Transportation and Flathead County radio technicians attended a two-day course on tower climbing, safety and rescue conducted by ComTrain LLC, a company that specializes in professional tower technician training and certification.

The first day was spent in the classroom learning about OSHA safety regulations and standards related to work at wireless communications sites.

Students also became informed about tools, equipment, climbing mechanics and rescue techniques.

The second day was focused on training in the field, where class participants used lifelines, rigging and other

equipment to maneuver on a tower structure and practice rescue techniques.

Participants had to successfully pass a written exam and demonstrate all field exercises to receive a lifetime certification. All class participants passed with flying colors.



State and county employees learn tower climbing, safety and rescue techniques.

**Don't forget to register for the free  
CASM training!**

To register, send your name, e-mail, telephone number and location to Carrie Castle, [ccastle@mt.gov](mailto:ccastle@mt.gov).

### 9-1-1 Network Contract Extended

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The State of Montana and Century Link have reached a tentative agreement to extend the 9-1-1 network contract for one year with no increased costs to participating Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The contract extension includes expanding the dedicated 9-1-1 network in eastern Montana; upgrading individual PSAPs from 56K to T1s; and providing additional customer service for Montana PSAPs.

The State did not renew the Public Safety Answering Point workstation equipment portion of the contract. Increased vendor costs were beyond the allowable price increase in the original contract.

"In the current economy, we feel we were very fortunate to hold the network portion of the contract at current rates and still be able to provide significant upgrades to the 9-1-1 network," said Becky Berger, State of Montana 9-1-1 Program Manager.

### Upcoming Meetings

- **Wed., June 16**  
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium  
Helena • 10:00 am – noon  
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Thurs., June 17**  
I-15/90 Corridor Consortium  
Butte • 10:00 am – noon  
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Tues., June 22**  
State Agency Radio Users Task Force  
Helena • 9:00 - 10:30 am  
Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey St.
- **Tues.-Thurs. June 22-24**  
Communication Asset Survey and Management (CASM) Training  
**Kalispell** on Tues., June 22 • 8:00 am – noon  
Red Lion Inn, 20 North Main  
**Helena** on Wed., June 23 • 8:00 am – noon  
ITSD Mitchell Building, 125 N. Roberts, Room 13  
**Billings** on Thurs., June 24 • 8:00 am – noon  
Best Western Kelly Inn, 4915 Southgate Drive
- **Tues.-Fri. June 22-25**  
2010 Joint Law Enforcement Training & Convention  
Helena • For more information and to register, visit:  
<http://www.mspsa.org/convention2010.htm>
- **Mon., June 28**  
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)  
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.